

# **Housing Seattle**

## Design Demonstration Projects



**1998** Documentation

SEAFIRST GALLERY

# Housing Seattle

## Design Demonstration Projects



Seattle Mayor Paul Schell and Seafirst Bank Chairman John V. Rindlaub announce Design Demonstration Projects selected for construction by the DDP Jury.

### Mayor's Report and Recommendation

Demonstration Program for Innovative Housing Design

September 30, 1998

**Cover:** Sydney Williams, *Neighborhood Street*, Linoleum block print, 1994.

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Seafirst Gallery is pleased to present, in cooperation with Mayor Paul Schell's Seattle Housing Action Agenda and the American Institute of Architects Seattle Chapter (AIA Seattle), an exhibition and documentation featuring entries to the city-wide design competition to generate unconventional blueprints for appropriate and innovative housing at all income levels.

This is an exciting time to focus on housing in Seattle. Mayor Paul Schell, the Seattle City Council, the Department of Construction and Land Use, AIA Seattle, and community representatives are all focused on finding solutions that will incorporate community concerns, form, and design. An overarching goal of the Design Demonstration Project was to identify satisfactory ways to increase housing density without sacrificing design, livability, or the characteristics that make each of Seattle's neighborhoods unique. Each of the entries, and especially those selected by a distinguished panel for further development, holds special promise, and sets a course toward redefining housing alternatives that meet the needs of Seattle's citizens with style.

In addition to presenting the entries to the competition, the Seafirst Gallery hosted two public events to encourage further dialogue on the subject of housing. On September 10, 1998, Seattle Mayor Paul Schell and Seafirst Bank Chairman John V. Rindlaub jointly announced the projects selected for honorable mention and "Should Be Built" status during a reception. The following week, on September 17, a distinguished panel of community leaders, moderated by Mark Hinshaw, discussed the merits of the entries and registered public comment on the advancement of the draft Design Demonstration Ordinance.

The Seafirst Gallery is pleased to join with the many dedicated people and agencies working together to ensure availability and diversity of housing for Seattle residents, and we are especially delighted to host this creative and collaborative means of identifying innovative approaches and solutions.

**Peggy Weiss**  
Seafirst Gallery

## Forward

Addressing a design community assembly in the early days of his mayoral term, Mayor Schell voiced a challenge: "Why doesn't AIA mount a 'Seattle House' design competition, and publish the results as a sourcebook for neighborhood planning groups and homebuilders?" This catalog documents a response to that challenge — undertaken by the AIA Seattle Housing Action Task Force convened within days of the Mayor's challenge.

As the work of the Task Force progressed, the focus turned from a standard "Seattle House" design, to the idea of "How can housing be more desirable and affordable if freed from the layers of prescriptive code restrictions which have grown up over the years? How can we increase the housing supply in an already established urban environment if we design from the standpoint of 'What should be built here?' rather than 'What will the code allow?'" Thus was born the Housing Seattle: Design Demonstration Project (DDP).

The Call for Entries invited "real projects that demonstrate neighborhood-appropriate approaches to increasing the inventory and quality of affordable housing." The 21 projects received illustrate the potential impact of code modifications with real projects on real sites and serve as case studies to assist in scoping and illustrating the Demonstration Ordinance currently under development by the City. Each and all the entries make a valuable contribution to the dialog — whether or not they were selected by the Jury as "Should Be Built."

This project was truly a team effort, bringing together many individuals and interests focused on housing and code issues, and many colleagues from the range of interests and functions involved in designing, financing, regulating, and building housing. Among those joining in our lively, pizza-fueled meetings: Denna Cline and others from the Mayor's office; City Council member Peter Steinbrueck AIA (what a boon to all of us to have the architect's vision and skills available to the Council's deliberations and decisions!); Rick Krochalis, Vince Lyons, Patrick Doherty, Diane Sugimura and others from the Seattle Department of Construction and Land Use; and many talented and visionary architects willing to help find new ways to design, finance, regulate, and build "outside the box."

As plans began to take shape, Seafirst Gallery sprang forward to offer a venue for the exhibit and events — providing a special opportunity for putting ideas before the public.

On September 4, a jury representing a span of interests and expertise in housing considered the 21 entries, and from them designated 11 projects as "Should Be Built." These projects will go forward into Design Review under the Demonstration Ordinance with the endorsement of the Mayors' Office and AIA Seattle.

The jury selected four additional projects for "Honorable Mention," on the basis of their contribution of ideas supporting the processes of change currently in process under the supervision of the Seattle City Council and within the Seattle Department of Construction and Land Use (DCLU). We appreciate the variety of projects entered, the creativity they evidence, and the positive intentions of all who offered their ideas through the Housing DDP program. We sincerely thank everyone who contributed: members of the Housing Action Task Force, Peggy Weiss and the Seafirst leadership, all the team members associated with the projects, Colorwheel Studio and Karen DeLucas for their contributors to the exhibit, members of the jury, Moderator Mark Hinshaw FAIA and the "Ideas to Reality" panelists. The many visitors who viewed the exhibit and took part in the events at the Gallery all added to the forum on housing ideas.

Those of us involved in this project feel a synergy of thought and focus rising into action. The Mayor has brought everyone to the table through the Seattle Housing Action Agenda; the Council is considering a Demonstration Ordinance to provide flexibility and to open possibilities; DCLU is revamping the permitting process; the Design Review Process is functioning better all the time; and the economic situation dictates that something must be done to insure all income levels have choices in housing. AIA Seattle is pleased to contribute to this momentum through this Design Demonstration Project.

We offer these results for your consideration with high hopes, believing that the process and this product offer instructive and positive contributions to the goals of Housing Seattle. We hope they will

pave the way for changes in the code and flexibility in interpretation to allow a wider range of quality projects to serve the Seattle citizens of today and tomorrow.

The suggestion has been made, more than once, that AIA Seattle should sponsor a Design Demonstration Program annually. This event marked a beginning and identified a general concept that in future years could apply to other factors affecting the quality and quantity of housing stock available in Seattle and the region. AIA Seattle would welcome the opportunity to join with our colleagues on a similar adventure next year.

**Michael H. Trower AIA**

Chair, Housing Seattle Design Demonstration Projects

**Carolyn D. Geise FAIA**

Chair, AIA Seattle Housing Action Task Force



Seattle Mayor Paul Schell and Seafirst Bank Chairman John V. Rindlaub during the presentation of awards at the evening's festivities.

**Seafirst Gallery thanks the following for helping to make this exhibition and associated events such a success:**

All architects and community representatives who participated by contributing their ideas to addressing housing in Seattle.

Colorwheel Studio, whose artwork added community color to the exhibition.

Peggy Lycett, Principal Video Production Specialist, at Channel 28.

Special thanks to Karen DeLucas at Geise Architects who assisted in the development of this exhibition.

Michael Trower and Carolyn Geise, for their guidance of the project.

Mark Hinshaw, who moderated *From Ideas to Action*, discussing how these projects can begin to address housing in Seattle.

PNTA who provided sound equipment.

From the Office of the Mayor, Mayor Paul Schell, and Denna Kline.

From the AIA, Marga Rose Hancock and Addy Froehlich.

From the Seattle City Council, Peter Steinbrueck, Richard Conlin.

From the DCLU, Diane Sugimura.

**Mayor Paul Schell**

**A Word from the Mayor**

As I noted in my introductory letter for the Seattle Housing Action Agenda, one of the most important problems I confront as Mayor is the crisis in affordable housing. We know there are no easy answers, so I've challenged my staff and the citizens of Seattle to look for creative solutions to the problem. I greatly appreciate the fact that AIA Seattle was quick to pick up that challenge and develop the Design Demonstration Projects. Little did I know that we would have such tremendous response from the broad community.

I've always felt that good design is a key to making additional development, additional density acceptable to a community. This project certainly illustrates how true that can be. I was thoroughly impressed to see this whole process come together — not only is it one of the first actions completed from the Housing Action Agenda, but it is such a success. As I walked around Seafirst Gallery to view the many proposals, I thought, "These are all winners." I am pleased that so many took the time to develop teams, work with their communities, and come up with innovative ways of challenging our codes, while still addressing the issue of affordable housing.

You've heard me talk about growing with grace. You've certainly shown us how that can happen. What an exciting process. Now it is the City's challenge to see that the "Should Be Builts" are built!

This process should also be a model for partnership as illustrated by the cooperation between AIA Seattle, Seafirst and its Gallery, the jury that came from many walks of life, and the City. Congratulations to all who had a hand in this project.

**Paul Schell**  
Mayor of Seattle

**Peter Steinbrueck**

**Taking the Ideas Forward**

Focusing on creative solutions to expand affordable housing in Seattle, the Design Demonstration Project — from its conception, to the exhibit, the selection announcement ceremony, and now this catalog, has been a resounding success! This is an effort I truly hope to see repeated in future years.

The architectural community has shown through this event that it can make a real contribution toward influencing public policy in areas of the built environment. As a City Councilmember, I pledge my continued enthusiastic involvement, working with the architectural community, to implement practical and creative solutions to address our affordable housing crisis.

Seattle's Land Use Code, an accretion of over 75 years of incremental regulatory changes, does not reflect a coherent vision for our great city of today. The Department of Construction and Land Use has begun difficult process of analysis and change in the body of codes that affect all development. The design profession, by informing the revision process, has an important role in shaping the future of Seattle.

**Peter Stenbrueck, AIA**  
Seattle City Council



### The DCLU's Challenge to make this happen...

We've talked of a Demonstration Ordinance for almost two years now, but it was AIA Seattle's process that really made this whole concept come to light. We currently have a draft of the concept paper and implementing legislation out for public review — we borrowed a number of the concepts from the Housing Design Demonstration Project. We hope the City Council will act quickly on the ordinance, so that we can make sure we have a mechanism to see these projects through to completion. AIA Seattle challenged the teams to come up with "real" projects. Now DCLU must make sure they become "realized" projects.

These projects will provide valuable information for our on-going Code improvement process. It also illustrates a number of positive solutions to meeting the housing challenges emerging from our many neighborhoods planning efforts.

This has also been a prime example of how the City can work together with private entities. We look forward to many more projects on which we can collaborate with AIA Seattle. How exciting it has been to challenge assumptions about how to create the housing that is so sorely needed in our city.

**Rick Krochalis**  
Director, Department of Design  
Construction & Land Use, City of  
Seattle

### Jury

Tom Byers	Office of the Mayor
Richard Conlin	Seattle City Council
Patrick Doherty	Seattle DCLU
Jerry Finrow FAIA	UW College of Architecture and Urban Planning
Charli Kasper	Housing Consumer Advocate
Nora Liu	HomeSight
Sheri Olson AIA	Architectural Record
Jack Rafn	Rafn Company
David Sucher	City Comforts
Ed Weinstein FAIA	Weinstein Copeland Architects
Jury Facilitator:	Don Carlson FAIA, Carlson Architects

### Summary of Jury Process and Selections:

The diverse backgrounds of the ten jury members assured a lively and comprehensive interchange — which all agreed "could have gone on for days." The jury reviewed 21 projects, representing a range of housing types and neighborhoods. "We appreciated the opportunity to see so many good ideas and meaningful efforts assembled. All of us owe a debt of thanks to the teams who brought their projects to this program," said AIA Seattle 1st Vice President Don Carlson FAIA, who facilitated the jury process.

The jury selected 11 projects as "Should Be Built," for endorsement by the Office of the Mayor and AIA Seattle as they enter design review. The selections include four Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) offering a variety of configurations and conditions. Other projects offered models for cohousing, cottage and carriage house structures, and multi-family compounds. The jury also chose to comment on several additional projects which

suggested innovative possibilities, but without the added promise of a "model" solution to the housing challenges facing Seattle neighborhoods seeking to accommodate additional population.

The jury expressed commitment to continuing the spirit of the Housing DDP program as the ideas it generates help inform City policy and become a source for neighborhoods and homebuilders — thanks to the catalog which Seafirst Gallery has generously offered to publish. In addition, the jury proposes to the Mayor and AIA Seattle that this program continue in future years, as a means to bring together a range of players to uncover and explore the ideas, building materials and technologies, and policies that can expand the capacity and quality of housing for all Seattle citizens — now and in the years to come.



Guests view the Design Demonstration Projects on display at the Seafirst Gallery.